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**Terrorist Professor Bill Ayers and Obama's Federal School Curriculum** – selective portions to abbreviate the original 10 pages found at: <http://www.aim.org/special-report/terrorist-professor-bill-ayers-and-obamas-federal-school-curriculum> - compiled by Joan Johnson, [mjohns05@comcast.net](mailto:mjohns05@comcast.net)

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Three years after the Department of Education announced a contest called Race-to-the-Top for \$4.35 billion in stimulus funds, some parents, teachers, governors, and citizen and public policy groups are coming to an awful realization about the likely outcomes:

- A national curriculum called Common Core
- Regionalism, or the replacement of local governments by federally appointed bureaucrats
- A leveling of all schools to one, low national standard, and a redistribution of education funds among school districts
- An effective federal tracking of all students
- The loss of the option of avoiding the national curriculum and tests through private school and home school

Working behind the scenes, implementing these policies and writing the standards are associates from President Obama's community organizing days. In de facto control of the education component is Linda Darling-Hammond, a radical left-wing educator and close colleague of William "Bill" Ayers, the former leader of the communist terrorist Weather Underground who became a professor of education and friend of Obama's.

How was it that 48 governors entered Race-to-the-Top without knowing outcomes?

It was one of the many "crises" exploited by the Obama administration. While the public was focused on a series of radical moves coming in rapid-fire succession, like the health care bill and proposed trials and imprisonment of 9/11 terrorists on domestic soil, governors, worried about keeping school doors open, signed on.

When initial White House visitor logs were released in 2009, the administration quickly dismissed speculations about visits by "William Ayers." That was a *different* William Ayers <sup>[4]</sup>

**Common Core is part of an effort to implement regionalism, the replacement of local governments by regional boards of federally appointed bureaucrats, who in turn are beholden to international bodies.** Regionalism will eliminate the freedom parents now have in choosing neighborhoods with good schools because tax funds will be distributed equally. There will be **no escape in home schooling or private schools either**, because the curriculum will follow national tests. Students will be tracked through mandatory state records that will then be accessible to Washington bureaucrats. Ultimately, all students will be subject to education mandates implemented by Obama's radical cronies.

Emmett McGroarty and Jane Robbins, in their white paper <sup>[10]</sup> "Controlling Education from the Top: Why Common Core Is Bad for America," describe the pressure and sleight-of-hand that led governors to sign onto a commitment that was then changed before the ink had fully dried. They reveal that rather than being a state-led reform initiative, as touted, the new **standards were written by a few well-connected, but non-qualified, education entrepreneurs**. The history goes back decades, but in the most recent phase, the vision for Common Core was set in 2007, by the Washington-based contractor, Achieve, Inc., in a document entitled *Benchmarking for Success*.

Two consortia of states (SBAC and PARCC)[iv] <sup>[12]</sup> have been given \$360 million in federal funds to **create national Common Core-aligned tests and “curriculum models.”** Well-connected companies, such as Educational Testing Service (ETS) and the multinational textbook company Pearson, are in competition to design the test. David Coleman, a chief architect of the Common Core standards for English/Language Arts, recently was named President of the College Board <sup>[13]</sup>, which administers tests, including those designed by ETS, like the SAT.

The Education Department on August 12, 2012, announced another competition <sup>[14]</sup> for \$400 million in Race-to-the-Top funds **for local districts** to “personalize learning, close achievement gaps and take full advantage of 21<sup>st</sup> century tools.” Such a competition cleverly bypasses recalcitrant states and lures individual districts into the federal web.

The Publisher’s Criteria reveal that a focus on short texts will equalize outcomes. Text selection guide B mandates that “all students (including those who are behind) have extensive opportunities to encounter grade-level complex text” through “supplementary opportunities.” **The strategy of gathering students into groups to collaborate on short passages ensures that no one advances beyond others.**[v] <sup>[15]</sup>

In the tradition of John Dewey, multiple “perspectives” and “critical thinking” are emphasized over the accumulation of “facts.” **Common Core advertises itself as promoting “skills,” rather than content.** The skills, though, do not promise to make students more knowledgeable about literature or history, but to make them “critical thinkers” in the tradition of the radical curriculum writers who are selectively critical of the U.S. and the West.

Former Senior Policy Advisor to the Department of Education and member of the California Mathematics Framework Committee, Ze’ev Wurman, testified that the **Common Core overlooks basic skills, lowers college readiness standards,** and offers “verbose and imprecise guidance,”[vii] <sup>[18]</sup> while **dictating that geometry be taught by an experimental method that was tested on Soviet math prodigies in the 1950s—and failed.**

In English classes, teachers will reduce the amount of time spent teaching their subject of literature to only 50 percent, and then to 30 percent in high school, a move criticized by education reform professor Sandra Stotsky. Replacing literature will be “informational texts” like nonfiction books, computer manuals, IRS forms, and original documents, like court decisions and the *Declaration of Independence*. Documents, like the *Declaration*, however, are taught in a manner that *downplays* their significance. **Overall, students will be losing a sense of a national and cultural heritage that is acquired through a systematic reading of classical literature and study of history**

**The replacement of traditional mathematics with “conceptual categories” lends itself to advancing a social justice agenda,** as Ayers colleague Eric Gutstein does <sup>[20]</sup> through his math education classes. The Common Core emphasis on having students simply explore original texts parallels the John Dewey-inspired approach that Ayers favors, of having students “discover” and “construct” knowledge. Not wanting to be beholden to outside, objective measurements of students’ knowledge, such teachers promote other more subjective measures, like displays of “deep” understanding, “higher-order” thinking, and ability to collaborate. By all indications, the testing being developed now will use such criteria.

Stanley Kurtz, in his latest book, *Spreading the Wealth*, maintains that a nationalized curriculum is part of an effort to replace local governments with regional boards, who would disburse local tax dollars equally among school districts. **Once all schools are the same—with the same curriculum and the same funding—people will no longer have the incentive to move to good suburbs.** While Obama’s

community organizing mentor, Mike Kruglik, implements the regionalism advocated by the Gamaliel Foundation through Building One America, Ayers' close associate, Linda Darling-Hammond, exercises "de facto control"[viii] <sup>[21]</sup> through education.

Both Ayers and Darling-Hammond were leaders in the small schools movement. Both have been advocates of ending funding disparities between urban and suburban schools, ending standardized testing, and attacking "white privilege." She has been a board member of CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning), a group housed at the University of Illinois at Chicago, that provides studies of, and services for, Emotional Intelligence in schools—but really emotional manipulation aimed at making students global citizens <sup>[22]</sup>.

### **Testing:**

Yet, Darling-Hammond served as education director on Obama's transition team.

Darling-Hammond is in charge of content specifications at the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC), which received \$176 million of federal Race-to-the-Top money to develop Common Core testing. She appears frequently as a speaker and board member of other affiliated organizations. For example, she sits on the Governing Board of the Alliance for Excellent Education, Inc., recipient of a \$500,000 Gates grant "to advocate for high school reform at the federal level in order to educate federal policy members about Common Core standards. . ."

In the August 2009 *Harvard Educational Review*, Darling-Hammond gave a preview of new standards as she argued for "deep understanding" and advancing beyond "the narrow views of the last eight years" by "developing creativity, critical thinking skills, and the capacity to innovate." New assessments would use "multiple measures of learning and performance." These would presumably emulate "high-achieving nations" that emphasize "essay questions and open-ended responses as well as research and scientific investigations, complex real-world problems, and extensive use of technology."

In an April 28, 2010, *Education Week* article, "Developing an Internationally Comparable Balanced Assessment System," Darling-Hammond claimed that the new assessment system is "designed to go beyond recall of facts and show students' abilities to evaluate evidence, problem solve and understand context." Bill Ayers, throughout his writings, likens the testing for "facts" to a factory or prison system, and agrees with Darling-Hammond's emphasis on criteria like "student growth along multiple dimensions." Such buzzwords thinly disguise an agenda of replacing the objective measurement of knowledge and skills with teachers' subjective appraisals of students' attitudes and behavior.

### **Trashing the United States in lessons:**

Common Core thus promises to *eliminate* the idea of a common core of knowledge—through the privileging of leftist "informational texts" and material presented in a scattershot manner. The national and cultural identity that is conveyed through a wide and interconnected exposure to literary works from Mother Goose to Shakespeare will be undermined.

The approach—where uninformed groups of students speculate about "original documents"—is intended to make **them radically skeptical of any historical legacy.**

Original documents are presented in such a manner as to actually diminish them. For example, a sample exercise about Abraham Lincoln's *Gettysburg Address* threw teachers into confusion when

they were instructed to refrain from providing background and to **read the speech without feeling**. In this way, this pivotal document is stripped of its historical significance and eloquence. Nor are the religious references, so important to Lincoln's speeches, to be mentioned. The strategy puts the *Gettysburg Address* on the same plane as other "informational texts," say about frogs or snakes.

Aronson presents FBI Director Hoover as a repressed homosexual, who exploited Americans' irrational fears about communism. Among the "original documents" that Aronson provides are photographs—of Hoover with his friend Clyde Tolson. He points out, for the **benefit of eleven-year-olds, that photos of Tolson reclining on a lawn chair, and fully clothed, "might be seen as lovers' portraits. . . but we cannot say for sure."**

#### Selling Common Core materials:

Publishers are promoting new Core-aligned materials. The American Library Association directs educators to their Booklist, which offers "classics" suggestions <sup>[30]</sup> from *contemporary* authors. More typical are categories like <sup>[31]</sup> "Exploring Diversity."

McGroarty and Robbins note that the Gates Foundation "has poured tens of millions of dollars into organizations that have an interest, financial or otherwise, in the implementation of Common Core."<sup>[xiii]</sup> <sup>[39]</sup> While the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation gives to worthy causes like fighting malaria and HIV infection, the foundation's 2010 IRS documents <sup>[40]</sup> reveal funding of other, mostly leftist, causes. Gifts went to the Tides Fund, and Planned Parenthood and other "reproductive health" efforts. In education, Gates has given money to teachers unions, La Raza schools, and a school named after Caesar Chavez.

They have given a lot to school districts. After Bill Gates met with the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, reporter Jaime Sarrio gushed about Gates' generosity: a \$20 million investment in "game-based learning," technical support in Georgia's Race to the Top application, **a gift of \$500,000 for teachers to meet the standards of Common Core, and \$10 million for Atlanta public schools' "Effective Teacher in Every Classroom" program** <sup>[41]</sup>.

Gates also gave millions to projects on "data collection" programs that track teacher and student progress.

The Gates Foundation supported efforts to market Common Core through media "education." The Corporation for Public Broadcasting received half a million dollars to "identify and amplify 'teacher voice' to help ensure teachers are in the center of the dialogue on teacher accountability" (nothing for parent or citizen voice, though). NPR received \$250,000 "to support coverage of education issues." The Education Writers Association received \$603,900 "to enhance media coverage of high school and post-secondary education by offering seminars and online training for reporters building bridges between mainstream and ethnic community media," and \$23,634 to "support media coverage of the education components of American Recovery and Reconstruction Act."

The Gates Foundation provided a \$489,453 grant to the George Soros/Obama mouthpiece, the Center for American Progress, "to help communicate the importance of education reforms and support progressive states seeking to implement them." The same year CAP was also awarded \$302,680 to "enhance degree completion for low-income young adults through the publishing of new policy papers, stakeholder engagement and media outreach." Over \$1 million was given to the Editorial Projects in Education, which publishes *Education Week*, which is supported by other foundations favoring Common Core. *Education Week* published the Darling-Hammond article promoting new assessments.

Stephen Diamond in an October 9, 2008, blog post complained that *Education Week* was “whitewashing” Obama’s relationship with Bill Ayers in the Annenberg Challenge.

Universities across the country received grants to promote Common Core, as did Boards of Regents. Columbia Teachers College, Ayers’ alma mater, and place of employment for Lucy Calkins, was a major beneficiary.

None of the education non-profits funded by Gates are dedicated to raising standards through a rigorous, traditional curriculum, or by promoting Western or American principles. As Heather Crossin and Jane Robbins point out, realistically, the idea of universal college-readiness can be met only by lowering standards. Some Common Core advocates have admitted<sup>[42]</sup> that this is the case.

**SMARTER BALANCE ASSESSMENTS IS FEDERALLY FUNDED WITH A FEDERALLY APPOINTED VALIDATION COMMITTEE.**

**When the federal government pays for something, there are always strings attached.**

**SMARTER is the consortium that Michigan State Board of Ed and Gov. Granholm contracted to write Michigan tests, in 2010. It is a 26 state member, FEDERALLY FUNDED CONSORTIUM, WITH A FEDERAL VALIDATION TEAM WHO WILL REVIEW SMARTER TESTS FOR “ITEM DESIGN AND VALIDATION”.**

**Attached is the actual webpage from the Federal Department of Education where it explains the federal oversight committee. Also linked here:**

**<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop-assessment/performance.html>**

**There are no governance rules to tell us how a state can challenge a question, change a question or eliminate a question on the test. No policies have been made public**

**SMARTER has a contract with Michigan to not only write year end testing, but interim, or what is called formative tests. Teachers will have to teach exactly, with exact timing what is tested.**

**These reasons are probably why 6 states have withdrawn from their testing consortium, Alabama, Georgia, Pennsylvania, Indiana, and Oklahoma and Florida. Wisconsin and Louisiana Governors have expressed that they do not like Common Core. Texas, and Nebraska, never signed on to testing. Below is an excerpt from a letter, also attached, from the Georgia State Superintendent John D. Barge to his district superintendents. Note his reasons involve cost, ability to change standards, local districts technology and student time on testing:**

***“Finally and arguably the most important consideration, adopting the PARCC assessment would limit the ability of Georgia educators to make adjustments or changes to our standards as we see fit. If Georgia educators determine that certain standards need to be shifted or revised, we would run the risk of no longer being aligned with PARCC assessment. Such misalignment would put our students at a disadvantage”***

I urge you to retain control of education by retaining control of testing and get us out of the SMARTER and all other testing consortiums. Build our own tests here, as Georgia is planning, and Texas and Nebraska have done. Michigan can develop its own knowledge and facts based tests. Contact: Deborah DeBacker 248-840-0397

